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EXAMINER

LEROUX, ETIENNE PIERRE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2171

DATE MAILED: 12/11/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/931,209

Applicant(s)

WYSS ET AL.

Examiner

Etienne P LeRoux

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 November 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 August 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

*Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1, 3-6, 8-12, 17, 20, 24, 32-34 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by SU Pat No 5,517,405 issued to McAndrew et al (hereafter McAndrew '405)

Claims 1, 12, 17, 24, 32, 33, 34:

McAndrew '405 discloses:

- operating a knowledge-base system [Fig 1, 40] configured to store in a database [Fig 1, 46] containing answers to questions,
- the knowledge-base system being operatively coupled to a client computer [Fig 1, 10];
- receiving a message from the client computer [structured mode 22, Fig 1 and col 8, lines 5-7]
- determining the message from the client computer was a reply to a previously generated message from the knowledge-base system [col 8, lines 6-16]
- forwarding the message from the client computer to a representative in response to said determining [col 8, lines 38-49].

Claims 3, 9:

McAndrew '405 discloses enclosing a message identification number on all communications sent by the knowledge-base system; and wherein said determining includes searching the

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message from the client computer for the message identification number [user interaction file col 6, lines 47-58].

Claim 4:

McAndrew '405 discloses attaching message history [col 6, lines 47-58]

Claim 5:

McAndrew '405 discloses a communication log [col 6, lines 47-58]

Claim 6:

McAndrew '405 discloses wherein the reply detection limit includes a communication interval limit of time intervals between successive communications with the client computer and a number of communications limits based on a number of communications with the client computer [col 9, line 63 through col 10, line 6].

Claim 8:

McAndrew '405 discloses a network [Fig 1 and col 6, line 32]

Claim 10:

McAndrew '405 discloses a human being [col 8, lines 30-37]

Claim 11:

McAndrew '405 discloses the representative is an automated system [col 8, lines 17-26]

Claim 20:

McAndrew '405 discloses a word index [col 7, lines 11-15]

Claim 45:

McAndrew '405 discloses wherein the previously generated message includes an answer to a question from the client computer, sending the answer from the knowledge-base system to the client computer before said receiving the message from the client computer [col 7, lines 45-57].

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 13-15, 27-30 and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405.

Claims 13-15:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 12 as noted above.

McAndrew '405 does not disclose wherein said creating includes modifying the response message to indicate that no answers were found when the query result does not contain any answers.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew to include the above claim language.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 as above for the purpose of providing the user with the latest available information concerning the question which the user asked.

Claims 27, 28, 29, 30:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 17 as noted above.

McAndrew '405 does not disclose designating one of the question-answer sets to always/never appear in the output for the query input.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include designating one of the question-answer sets to always/never appear in the output for the query input.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 for the purpose of including a patient's name, age sex etc in the output.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 to never include an output for the purpose of confidentiality.

Claim 41:

McAndrew '405 discloses means for determining a message from a client computer was a reply to a previously generated message from a FAQ database and forwarding the message to a representative in response; means for evaluating question components and answer components of the FAQ database independently relative to an input query [Fig 1 and col 8, lines 5-49]

McAndrew '405 fails to disclose means for providing a response to the FAQ database query in accordance with one or more response templates, the response templates each relating to a different response format.

Official Notice is taken that means for providing a response to the FAQ database query in accordance with one or more response templates, the response templates each relating to a different response format is well-known and expected in the art.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew to include the above elements for the purpose of providing an output display that is attractive and easily understandable.

5. Claims 2, 7 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of Pub No US 2003/0005079 issued to Mittal (hereafter Mittal '079) Claims 2,7, 31:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 1 as noted above.

McAndrew does not disclose e-mail.

Mittal '079 discloses e-mail [paragraph 0044].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include e-mail as taught by Mittal '079

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew for the purpose of providing a client with updates while on-line [paragraph 0044].

6. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of Pub No US 2001/0039508 issued to Nagler et al (hereafter Nagler '508) Claim 16:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 12 as noted above.

McAndrew does not disclose calculating a score for each question and answer in the database; and selecting at least one answer based upon a dynamic threshold resulting from a statistical distribution of all scores.

Nagler '508 discloses calculating a score for each question and answer in the database; and selecting at least one answer based upon a dynamic threshold resulting from a statistical distribution of all scores [abstract]

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include calculating a score for each question and answer in the database; and selecting at least one answer based upon a dynamic threshold resulting from a statistical distribution of all scores as taught by Nagler '508.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 for the purpose of providing objective attributes [abstract]

7. Claims 18, 19 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of Pub No US 2003/0050803 issued to Marchosky (hereafter Marchosky '803).

Claim 18:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 17 as noted above.

McAndrew '405 does not disclose weighting the answers more than the questions.

Marchosky '803 discloses relative weighting of questions and relative weighting of answers [paragraph 0014].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include relative weighting of questions and relative weighting of answers as taught by Marchosky '803.



The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 as above for the purpose of providing the physician with tests which may be conducted on the patient [paragraph 0024]

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the combination of McAndrew '405 and Marchosky '803 to make the weighting of the answers more than the weighting of the questions.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to make the weighting of the answers more than the weighting of the questions for the purpose of relating the answers to specific symptoms [paragraph 0024]

Claims 19, 25:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 17 as noted above.

McAndrew '405 does not disclose weighting the answers more than the questions.

Marchosky '803 discloses relative weighting of questions and relative weighting of answers [paragraph 0014].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include relative weighting of questions and relative weighting of answers as taught by Marchosky '803.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 as above for the purpose of providing the physician with tests which may be conducted on the patient [paragraph 0024]

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Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the combination of McAndrew '405 and Marchosky '803 to make the weighting of the answers more than the weighting of the questions.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to make the weighting of the questions more than the weighting of the answers for the purpose of relating the questions to broad categories of a plurality of different answers.

8. Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of US Pat No 6,546,383 issued to Ogawa (hereafter Ogawa '383).

Claims 21 and 22:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 17 as noted above.

McAndrew '405 does not disclose scoring a length of one of the questions in proportion to a length of the query input.

Ogawa '383 discloses scoring a length of one of the questions in proportion to a length of the query input [claim 15].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include scoring a length of one of the questions in proportion to a length of the query input as taught by Ogawa '383.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 for the purpose of crating a document retrieval system [abstract]

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9. Claims 23 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of US Pat No 6,553,364 issued to Wu (hereafter Wu '364).

Claims 23 and 42:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 17 as noted above.

McAndrew does not disclose designating one or more words to ignore.

Wu '364 discloses one or more words to ignore [col 6, lines 10-21]

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include one or more words to ignore as taught by Wu '364.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew for the purpose of eliminate words that are very common and would produce a search of limited usefulness [col 6, lines 10-21].

10. Claims 26 and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of US Pat No 6,023,670 issued to Martino et al (hereafter Martino '670).

Claims 26 and 43:

McAndrew '405 discloses the elements of claim 17 as noted above.

McAndrew '405 does not disclose defining aliases for at least one word.

Martino '670 discloses defining aliases for at least one word [col 7, lines 17-37].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include defining aliases for at least one word as taught by Martino '670.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew for the purpose of improving correlation scores [col 7, line 23]

11. Claims 35 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew '405 in view of US Pat No 6,028, 988 issued to Schultz (hereafter Shultz '988).

Claims 34 and 36:

McAndrew '405 discloses operating a knowledge base system configure to store a database formatted with a number of question-answer sets, the knowledge-base system being operatively coupled to a client computer and receiving an input corresponding to a question from the client computer [Fig 1].

McAndrew '405 does not disclose scoring the question-answer sets with respect to the question, determining a threshold limit based upon said scoring and selecting the question – answer sets with scores above the threshold limit.

Schultz '988 discloses scoring the question-answer sets with respect to the question, determining a threshold limit based upon said scoring and selecting the question –answer sets with scores above the threshold limit [col 1, lines 45-67.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include scoring the question-answer sets with respect to

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the question, determining a threshold limit based upon said scoring and selecting the question – answer sets with scores above the threshold limit as taught by Schultz ‘988.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew as above for the purpose of identifying a query theme [col 1, lines 45-67].

12. Claims 37-40 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McAndrew ‘405 in view of US Pat No 5,779,549 issued to Walker et al (hereafter Walker ‘549).

Claims 37-39 and 44:

McAndrew ‘405 discloses:

- operating a knowledge-base system configured to store a database formatted with a number of question-answer sets,
- the knowledge-base system being operatively coupled to a client computer; receiving an input corresponding to a question from the client computer;
- selecting one or more candidate sets from the question-answer sets based on the question from the client computer [Fig 1, col 8, lines 5-16]

McAndrew ‘405 discloses the above noted elements.

McAndrew ‘405 does not disclose creating a reflexive index that includes the question from the client computer and at least the candidate sets; scoring each question from the candidate sets against the reflexive index; scoring the question from the client against the reflexive index to generate a question score; choosing the candidate sets with scores that correlate with the question score.

Walker '549 discloses creating a reflexive index that includes the question from the client computer and at least the candidate sets; scoring each question from the candidate sets against the reflexive index; scoring the question from the client against the reflexive index to generate a question score; choosing the candidate sets with scores that correlate with the question score [col 13, lines 15-40]

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify McAndrew '405 to include creating a reflexive index that includes the question from the client computer and at least the candidate sets; scoring each question from the candidate sets against the reflexive index; scoring the question from the client against the reflexive index to generate a question score; choosing the candidate sets with scores that correlate with the question score as taught by Walker '549.

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify McAndrew '405 for the purpose of adjusted the difficulty level of a game session as the game session is played [col 13, line 16].

Claim 40:

The combination of McAndrew '405 and Walker '549 disclose the elements of claim 39 as noted above.

The combination of McAndrew '405 and Walker '549 does not disclose wherein the reflexive index further includes all of the question-answer sets.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of McAndrew '405 and Walker '549 to include wherein the reflexive index further includes all of the question-answer sets

The ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify the combination of McAndrew '405 and Walker '549 for the purpose of obtaining a good overall and all-inclusive result

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed 11/29/2003, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

#### **First Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states in lines 1-4 of page 13 "It should be appreciated after reading this paragraph that nowhere does the passage explicitly state that the expert system of McAndrew actually forwards a referral to a reviewer. It appears that the system, at most, only recommends that a referral be made."

#### **First Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., forwarding a referral to a reviewer) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

#### **Second Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states on page 14, lines 4-11 "For instance, McAndrew '405 fails to disclose or suggest selecting one or more of the question-answer sets with the system in response to the

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query input by evaluating presence of the word in one or more answers of the question-answer sets differently than presence of the word in one or more questions of the question-answer sets as recited in claim 17. Nowhere does McAndrew '405 mention that questions and answers are evaluated differently during selection of one or more question-answer sets. For this and other reasons, it is submitted that independent claim 17 and its dependent claims are allowable over the references of record."

**Second Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. McAndrew discloses in column 10, lines 23-27 the following:

The inference engine uses the answers to the questions, as indicated via dashed arrow 82, to generate additional questions for display to the user. In this manner, a complete questionnaire is dynamically built and answered to enable the inference engine to make a recommendation as to the acceptability of the proposed treatment.

Examiner maintains that McAndrew '405 discloses that questions and answers are evaluated differently.

**Third Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states on page 14 "With respect to independent claim 34, it was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by SU [sic] Pat No 5,517,405 issued to McAndrew et al in item 4 of the Office Action. The applicants in traversal submit that McAndrew '405 fails to disclose all of the features recited in independent claim 34. Some of the features from claim 34 that are missing from McAndrew '405 include for example scoring the question-answer sets with respect to the question; determining a threshold limit based upon said scoring; and selecting the question-answer sets with scores above the threshold limit."



**Third Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. Examiner maintains the following disclosure by McAndrew '405 column 8, lines 17-26 reads on the claimed threshold limit:

In addition to providing a recommendation as to whether or not to accept a proposed solution to a problem, inference engine 40 can also be provided with rules to enable it to suggest alternative solutions (e.g., medical treatments or care options). In medical applications, the expert system can also access information concerning insurance policy coverage (insurance information 48) from database 42 or via router 12 from database 14, to make a determination as to whether a proposed treatment is covered by a particular patient's medical insurance policy.

**Fourth Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states on page 15, lines 27-28, 'As should be appreciated, Walker '549 fails to disclose or suggest a number of stages as recited in claim 39.'

**Fourth Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., a number of stages) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

**Fifth Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states in the first paragraph on page 16 various limitations that Walker '549 does not disclose.

**Fifth Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the

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rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208

USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

**Sixth Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states "Without the benefit of hindsight gained from viewing the present application, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention would not have modified the cited references as asserted in the Office Action to arrive at the invention as recited in the present claim 39, especially since both references omit a number of features.

**Sixth Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971).

**Seventh Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states on page 17, lines 7- “Applicants also traverse the use of Official Notice with respect to independent [claim] 41 and respectfully request that documentary evidence be provided to support the cited contention.”

**Seventh Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. Examiner maintains that a FAQ database is well-known and expected in the art. McAndrew ‘405 discloses a FAQ database in column 7, lines 45-57.

**Eighth Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states on page 17 “For example, both the references fail to disclose a database further including a question index that associates each of said words in said question fields with each of said question-answer sets and an answer index that associates said words in said answer fields with each of said question-answer sets.”

**Eighth Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. Applicant is referred to supra Second Examiner Response.

**Ninth Applicant Argument:**

Applicant states on page 18 that both reference fail to disclose “a matcher operatively coupled to said database to produce a query result using both said question index and said answer index in response to the question from the client computer.”

**Ninth Examiner Response:**

Examiner is not persuaded. Applicant is referred to supra second response by examiner.

**Conclusion**

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Etienne LeRoux whose telephone number is (703) 305-0620. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Safet Metjahic, can be reached on (703) 308-1436.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

Etienne LeRoux

December 8, 2003



SAFET METJAHIC  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100